

DOLIR REVIEW

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Missouri Telecommunications Access Program (TAP) is Recognized by American Foundation for the Blind

By Dr. Diane Cordry Golden, Director, Missouri Assistive Technology Council

The American Foundation for the Blind (AFB) annually recognizes individuals, organizations, and corporations that eliminate or substantially reduce inequities faced by people who are blind or visually impaired. This year AFB recognized the Missouri Telecommunications Access Program (TAP) for Internet as the first and only program in the country that provides adaptive computer equipment and training, at no cost, to eligible Missourians with disabilities. Senator Harold Caskey was specifically recognized for his work in passing the legislation that established this program and the Missouri Assistive Technology Council was recognized for successful initiation and operation of the program.

While most states have programs that provide adaptive telephone equipment such as text telephones and amplified telephones, Missouri is the first state to expand the program to include adaptive computer equipment needed for Internet and e-mail access. TAP for Internet provides a full range of computer

adaptations to meet the needs of all types of disabilities

including screen readers and enlarging software for individuals with vision disabilities and alternative keyboards and voice recognition software for individuals with mobility limitations. Since beginning in June 2001, TAP for Internet has provided almost 400 adaptive devices to Missourians with disabilities, enabling many of them to access the Internet and electronic mail for the very first time.

One of those benefiting from the program is Dr. Howard Heidbrink, a former Pleasant Hill Schools superintendent, who acquired a significant vision disability after retirement. "The adaptive devices from TAP for Internet have opened up a whole new world that I thought was closed forever as a result of macular degeneration," he said. Dr. Heidbrink and many other Missourians with disabilities are now able to remain independent and active in their communities because of the equipment available through TAP for Internet.



From left, Marnie Gustafson, Missouri Assistive Technology Council past chairperson; Roselie Backer Thompson, TAP for Internet coordinator; Senator Harold Caskey and Sharon LaRoussa, Missouri Assistive Technology Council chairperson, receive their award.

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GLENN EASLEY

Title:

Mediator

Division:

Workers' Compensation

Section:

*Regulatory Section/Dispute
Management Unit*

Location:

Jefferson City

Employee Profile

Q What do you consider the most important thing your program/division does for Missouri citizens?

A I am one of three mediators. All of us are lawyers. We provide information and mediation services in the early stages of workers' compensation cases to employees, employers, insurers, health care providers and their lawyers. We help the parties work toward resolving their disputes informally and, often, the parties may thereby avoid the delay, expense and stress of contested litigation.

Q How does what you personally do in your job help or affect Missouri citizens?

A We "de-mystify" the Missouri Workers' Compensation System and help the parties understand what is possible and what is not. A "reality check" from an unbiased person allows heated emotions to "vent." Then, the parties can work toward resolving their differences.

Q How do you think what you do could be improved or changed to better serve Missourians?

A We could help even more people with greater publicity about our program and the Division of Workers' Compensation's toll-free "help lines" (Employees may call 800-775-2667 and employers may call 888-837-6069).

Q What part of what you do gives you the most satisfaction/pride/feeling of accomplishment?

A I enjoy meeting new people and helping them with their workers' compensation issues. Many times a caller will start out quite upset and I will be able to help the caller understand the other side's point of view and that, under our system, both sides have rights. No one really wants a system whereby making one phone call to Jefferson City (and telling only one side) would alter the outcome of a case.

Fred Case Named 2001 DOLIR Employee of the Year

Charles "Fred" Case was named Department Employee of the Year for 2001. He received his award in a ceremony held at the Dunklin Street facility March 22.

Case is an office service coordinator with the Department's Facilities and Maintenance section in Jefferson City. He was selected as the August 2001 Employee of the Month for his extraordinary contribution to the Department's Missouri Youth Leadership Forum (MYLF). MYLF is a unique career leadership training



Fred Case is presented the 2001 Department Employee of the Year Award by Deputy Department Director Tom Pfeiffer.

program for high school juniors and seniors with disabilities. Case went beyond his normal work duties to help transport students and accompany them during free time activities such as bowling and shopping for souvenirs.

The Employee of the Year is chosen from among all the employees of the month for that year, and is selected based on outstanding job performance, initiative and extra effort taken in the performance of job duties.

LABOR COMMISSION HAS HIGHEST PARTICIPATION IN BLOOD DRIVE

The results are in from the Spring 2002 State Employee Blood Drive held March 20.

The DOLIR section/unit with the highest percentage participation in the 2002 Spring Blood Drive was the Labor and Industrial Relations Commission with a participation rate of 53 percent.

Participation from other sections/units were:

Employment Security, Collections – 37 percent

Employment Security, Liability – 31 percent

Employment Security, Employer Accounts – 28 percent

Employment Security, Jefferson City Regional Claims Center – 13.75 percent

Employment Security, Benefits – 8.7 percent

Labor Standards – 3.3 percent

Workers' Compensation – 1 percent

Administrative Services – 1 percent

Missouri Commission on Human Rights – 1 percent

The staff of the Labor Commission received a continental breakfast as a reward for their efforts.

Thank you to everyone who participated in the blood drive. A gift of life is the most precious gift to give to someone in need. Don't forget the 2002 Fall Blood Drive will be Wednesday, September 18, 2002, from 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. in the DOLIR Building's 2nd floor conference room.

DEPARTMENT EMPLOYEES RECEIVE MISSOURI IT RECOGNITION AWARD

The Department's Internet Claim Filing System Team was selected to receive the Information Technology Advisory Board's "Missouri IT Recognition Award" for their work in the development and implementation of the online unemployment benefits claim filing system.

The award is given to recognize either technical or non-technical individuals or teams who have shown

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Recognizing the Accomplishments of State Employees



This month's **DOLIR Review** is full of stories about DOLIR employees who have made significant efforts above and beyond regular work duties. In this issue you will read about co-workers receiving awards for their work as individuals and as teams, workers who are recognized for suggesting ways to improve Department services, and even those who have taken the time to help others by donating blood.

The first week of May 2002 has been designated Public Employee Recognition Week in Missouri. This is a time for us to remember and reflect on the many important contributions made to this state and all Missourians by state government and other public employees and show our appreciation to them. This recognition is well deserved.

But I, for one, believe we should do this all year long. After all, your contributions are not limited to any one week, nor should our gratitude for your hard work be limited by the calendar.

So I offer here my heartfelt thank you to each employee at DOLIR for your continuing good work and dedication. I am proud to be a part of the DOLIR team.

Catherine Shephard

initiative, creative thinking, and/or extraordinary effort by participating in an information technology initiative that resulted in a positive impact and significant value to a state government agency and/or the state information technology community.

"A significant contribution in serving Missouri citizens is the result of innovation, hard work and team spirit," said Jill C. Hansen, IT Advisory Board chairperson. "This was accomplished by the DOLIR Internet Claim Filing System Team."

Department of Labor and Industrial Relations Internet Claim Filing System Team members are: Barry Beach, Bruce Berger, Rob Brown, Rhonda Decker, Donald Distler, Jackie Duff, Bill Frank, Joe Harrison, John Helmig, Marilyn Hutcherson, Doug Kaylor, Janet Lepper, Terry Malone, James Meyer, Nancy Miller, Thelma Mirts, John Namassy, Jearl Reagan, Don Slinkard, Monica Smith, Alan Spears, Judy Stegeman,

Dave Strange, Jamie Terrill, Mike Veit and Randy Wilkerson.

BOOTH VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Volunteers are needed to help staff the Department's information booth at this year's **Mid-America Labor/Management Conference** at Tan-Tar-A Resort in Osage Beach June 24-26.

Booth workers are also needed for the **Governor's Economic Development Conference**, May 30-31 at the Lodge of the Four Seasons at Lake of the Ozarks.

Interested DOLIR employees can contact Joann Lindemann in Public Affairs at (573) 522-2547 or jlindemann@dolir.state.mo.us. Please be sure to obtain your supervisor's approval prior to volunteering.

Department Human Resources Chief Invents Child's Stadium Seat



Ernestine Gage had an idea she couldn't shake. "The idea scared me it was so obvious," she says looking back. "I couldn't get it out of my mind."

The idea was for a child-sized version of a bleacher seat to use at sporting events. Because her youngest son is an athlete, Gage and her family find themselves spending a lot of time at basketball and football games.

When her first granddaughter was old enough to go to the games with the family, Gage started searching for a stadium seat for the toddler. She noticed that the young children at the events were either on an adults lap, or sliding off the bleachers. After searching for something already on the market, she came up empty handed.

It was on the way home from a college football game in 1998 that she was struck by the idea. "It hit me like a ton of bricks," Gage says. "I started drawing and writing down my thoughts on paper napkins we had in the car."

Her idea was the design of a child's stadium seat, complete with backrest and safety straps, that securely attaches to a bench, bleacher, chair or planar seat. She sought help from a friend who worked for a group of patent attorneys and worked to patent the idea. The Missouri Department of Economic Development put her in touch with engineers who did mechanical drawings and made a prototype of the seat.

Now, Gage is evaluating her options for marketing her invention, and is considering contracting with a variety of companies to produce the seat. She also has the option of manufacturing it herself.

But, the experience of taking her idea and turning it into reality has led her to aspire to more than just marketing her product.

Gage wants to use her experience as a female inventor to help others and has developed a presentation to share as motivation and encouragement to others to pursue their ideas. "As long as you harbor your idea, it isn't doing you, or anybody else, any good," she says. And she adds, "I would also like to develop a more general, motivational workshop with a 'you can do it' kind of message."



*Artist's rendering of Gage's
child stadium seat.*

Quote of the Month

"We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give."

– Winston Churchill

Adding Value, Bringing Hope ... St. Francois County Community Partnership

Recognized as a Community Partnership in 1999, St. Francois County has made significant changes in their community including increased access to resources, community involvement, improved service delivery, state and school support and leverage of resources to improve conditions for children and families.

At one point during the last 10 years, St. Francois County was the fastest growing county in the state and the region. Out of 115 counties in the state (including St. Louis City), St. Francois County is the sixteenth largest county. The county's population is 55,790 and the county is still growing.

St. Francois is a largely rural area made up of several distinct and separate communities. The county and its population centers are located along U.S. Highway 67. Until the mid-60's, this area was the world's leader in lead mining. All lead mining has stopped in this county and the mines are now tourist attractions, especially for underwater divers. The old mines are one of the hottest extreme sports spots in the country for diving.

Additionally, the county has two major state prisons (one due to open spring 2001), two hospitals, one college and a regional mental health facility. The county is in the parkland region with six major state parks and a national forest in the county or in surrounding counties.

The county's child population is 14,003 or 25.1% of the total population of St. Francois County. The Partnership has discovered many areas of concern:

- The free and reduced cost school lunch program has seen a constant increase in participation over the last several years, rising to 43.4%; the state rate is 35.9%.
- The county has also had a continued increase in the total number of families with school age children living in poverty, increasing from 17.3% to a high of 26.8%.
- The child abuse and neglect rate has been high over the last several years, reaching a peak of 19.9 in 1997, ranking St. Francois County 103 out of 115 counties in Missouri. This year the county is ranked 93 with a 36% rate for probable child abuse and neglect.
- The number of children with serious emotional disorders has increased from 184 in 1994 to 477 in 1999, an increase of 159%.

The mission of the St. Francois Community Partnership is to build, nurture and strengthen families, ensuring that every person has the opportunity to become a healthy, productive and contributing member of the community. Many tools have gone into the making of the St. Francois Partnership and they are working tirelessly to improve the conditions for children and families.

Linda Baker Oberst, Governor's Council on Disability in St. Louis, serves as the DOLIR Local Resource Team member for St. Francois County.

*Neet McCowen is Caring Communities Coordinator for the Department.
To reach her, please call (573) 751-3817.*

Dunn's Safety Tips - Indoor Air Pollution

When most of us think of air pollution, we think of smog, traffic jams and car exhaust fumes. But the air inside your home can be even more polluted than the outdoor air of a big city. Many of today's newer homes with weather-tight construction and inadequate ventilation actually have higher levels of unhealthy air than some older, draftier homes.

If you are like most people, you spend up to 90 percent of your time indoors. That's why it is important that you assess the air quality of your workplace and home. This is even more important if you have small children or if you're older or chronically ill.

Worst indoor air pollution offenders:

♦ Tobacco Smoke

People who live in homes with smokers face a 30 percent higher risk of lung cancer. If you must smoke, do it outdoors. Room air-filtering devices remove mainly smoke's solid particles, not the gases.

♦ Radon

Radon is a naturally occurring gas that results from the radioactive decay of uranium found in varying amounts in rocks and soil. You can't see, taste or smell radon, but it can seep into your home through basement cracks, sewer

openings and joints between walls and floors. Prolonged exposure to high levels of radon may lead to lung cancer. To assess your home, get a radon detector. Hardware stores usually carry them. If you find your home contains dangerous levels of radon, call the EPA radon hotline at (800) 767-7236.

♦ Carbon Monoxide and other gases from burning fuels

Burning fuel such as oil, natural gas, kerosene, coal or firewood releases pollutants, including carbon monoxide. Carbon monoxide is a colorless, odorless and tasteless gas. Sources include tobacco smoke, car exhaust, fireplaces, incinerators, gas appliances and furnaces. It is harmful in any amount, and can kill you.

Install carbon monoxide detectors, preferably outside each bedroom to help protect you.

Other common indoor pollutants like mold, dust mites, home chemicals and redecorating hazards like paint fumes can also cause problems. Check that all appliances and ventilation systems are working properly. And practice common sense. If you smell a strange or stale odor, investigate.

Source: www.Walgreens.com

Steve Dunn is the Department's Safety Coordinator.

He is also Director of the Mine and Cave Safety and Health Consultation Program for the Division of Labor Standards.

Workers' Comp Fraud Unit Investigations Lead to Conviction of 12 Employers and Three Employees

The Missouri Division of Workers' Compensation's Fraud and Noncompliance Unit conducted investigations leading to the conviction of 12 Missouri employers and three employees since November 1, 2001.

- A Cape Girardeau County resident pled guilty February 25, 2002 for making a false statement concerning her alleged workers' compensation injury. The state Attorney General's office prosecuted. The defendant received a suspended sentence, probation, community service and had to pay court costs.
- The owner of numerous in-home care facilities around the state as well as his corporation, pled guilty February 21, 2002 to charges related to the failure to provide workers' compensation insurance for employees. The St. Louis County Prosecutor's office fined the corporation \$25,000. The owner was placed on probation and must pay for any workplace injuries during the noncompliance period.
- The owner of a St. Charles County dry cleaning business, pled guilty January 11, 2002 to charges stemming from failure to provide workers' compensation insurance for employees. He received two years probation and a fine of \$2,000.
- A St. Charles County employee pled guilty to charges stemming from a fraudulent workers' compensation claim

February 4, 2002. An investigation revealed that the defendant provided false and misleading statements to the employer and medical provider in an attempt to get benefits he was not entitled to. He received probation and was ordered to perform community service.

- A Jefferson County resident pled guilty December 28, 2001 to charges stemming from a fraudulent claim for workers' compensation benefits. An investigation revealed that the injury had occurred at her home. The defendant received a suspended sentence, probation and was ordered to reimburse the hospital \$1,660 and the insurance company \$643.99.
- The owner of a home repair business in St. Louis County, pled guilty November 7, 2001 to failure to provide workers' compensation insurance for employees. He received a suspended sentence, was placed on probation for two years, required to maintain insurance, reimburse the Second Injury Fund for any award made while uninsured, assessed a fine of \$5,000 and required to reimburse a workplace injury victim for medical bills.
- The owner of a sawmill in Shannon County pled guilty to charges of failing to insure his employees for workers' compensation on November 6, 2001. He received a suspended sentence and

probation. He was also required to pay a \$7,000 fine and court costs, as well as an award to an injured worker.

In addition to these cases, 30 employers agreed to pay fines totaling \$79,815.50 and signed deferred prosecution/hold harmless agreements between November 1, 2001 and March 1, 2002. Under this agreement, the employer must agree to purchase workers' compensation coverage for its employees, waive the statute of limitations for any claims that arose during the period the employer was uninsured, pay a fine and hold the state's Second Injury Fund harmless for any known or unknown injuries during the noncompliance period.

The Fraud and Noncompliance Unit of the Missouri Division of Workers' Compensation is responsible for investigating all allegations of workers' compensation fraud and noncompliance throughout the state. The unit investigates allegations of fraud by employees, employers, attorneys, insurers or physicians. Noncompliance is the failure by employers to carry workers' compensation insurance, or to post notice of workers' compensation at the workplace. Appropriate cases of fraud and noncompliance are referred to the state Attorney General's Office for prosecution.

Employee Suggestions Implemented

By Tammy Cavender, Strategic Planner

Since July 2001, department employees have been voicing their ideas through the Employee Suggestion Program (ESP). Nearly 50 suggestions ranging from department-wide matters to very specific agency program issues have been reviewed. Suggestions improving current methods, programming and processes have been approved. Expanding flexible work hours for employees, developing a better process for incoming phone calls, allowing agencies an opportunity to review a list of items going to surplus, combining the Enter/Exit form and changing the distribution of how employees receive job related information are just a few of the suggestions approved and implemented.

Among the employees awarded for implemented suggestions are:

Administration

John Helmig, Computer Information Technician Specialist II in Jefferson City
Kathy Ruppel, Computer Information Technician III in Jefferson City

Division of Employment Security

Patricia Beard, Contributions Supervisor IV in St. Louis
Christina Dodson, Claims Technician II in St. Louis
Dyan Emery, Claims Technician II in Springfield

Gerald Sharp, Claims Technician II in Springfield
Paula Whitworth, Claims Technician II in Springfield

Division of Workers' Compensation

Eric Hallerud, Safety Consultant II in Kansas City
Paula Hinshaw, Insurance Finance Analyst II in Jefferson City

Director's Office

Karla Hogg, Assistant to the Department Deputy Director in Jefferson City

Human Resources

Gail Wolken, Personnel Analyst I in Jefferson City

The Department encourages employees to submit suggestions that will improve methods, procedures, product quality and service, increase productivity, provide new, innovative services or products or save time, material, labor or money. Awards ranging from a keychain to two administrative days off are options employees may select if their suggestion is approved.

For more information regarding the employee suggestion program, please refer to B05-19700 in the Administration Manual or contact Tammy Cavender at (573) 522-2546. The Administration Manual may be found on the department Intranet.

LIFESTYLES

Retirees from March 2002

Administration

Sharon Mallicoat, Computer Operator II, Information Systems

Division of Labor Standards

Bonnie Loveall, Designated Principal Assistant

Division of Employment Security

Anna Evans, Office Support Assistant, Employer Contributions

Sharon Romph, Claims Technician I, Jefferson City Regional Claims Center

New Employees from March 2002

Division of Employment Security

Rebecca Crockett, Claims Technician I, Springfield Regional Claims Center

Patrick Curry, Contributions Technician I, Employer Contributions

Linda Hunter, Claims Technician I, Springfield Regional Claims Center

Lynda Kerr, Senior Office Support Assistant, Employer Contributions

Tracy Lafollette, Claims Technician I, Springfield Regional Claims Center

Mary O'Keefe, Senior Office Support Assistant, Benefits

Arvonna Turner, Claims Technician I, Springfield Regional Claims Center

Jess Tydings, Claims Technician I, Jefferson City Regional Claims Center

Helene VonSeckendorff, Claims Technician I, Springfield Regional Claims Center

Becky Wills is February Employee of the Month

Becky Wills, chief administrator of the Department's Financial Management Section in Jefferson City, is the Department's February 2002 Employee of the Month.



Wills was nominated based on her outstanding work with Missouri Assistive Technology, a part of the Governor's Council on Disability.

According to the staff at Missouri Assistive Technology, Wills' commitment to the effective and efficient operation of the Department's Financial Management section is unquestionable. "Becky is incredibly responsive to any and all requests placed upon her," they say, adding, "She has taken the time to learn about our programs, supports our program operations and makes sure we are able to deliver quality and timely services."

Will's nominators also note that her dependable, competent and timely support makes their operation more efficient, too. "Our work frequently involves other departments and agencies, and Becky is able to competently work with those agencies on fund transfers, contract payment arrangements, etc. which results in expanded and improved services for people with disabilities."

REFLECTIONS

Anna Evans retired March 31, 2002 after more than 25 years with the Department. Evans worked as a clerk typist in the Division of Employment Security's Employer Contributions section.



"I have been thinking of my fondest memory working in Employment Security," said Evans. I started here on August 9, 1976. At that time I was thrilled to be hired in keypunch. I have made many new friends over the years and will not forget the friendships," Evans said.

"When we had the DES Club, I enjoyed all the activities that were planned for the different seasons of the year. There was a baby contest one year, where we brought in our baby pictures

for co-workers to guess who they were. No one guessed mine."

She adds, "The 25 plus years have flown by. I will not forget working here with a good bunch of co-workers."

Bonnie Loveall retired March 31, 2002 after more than 36 years with the Division of Labor Standards, and more than 45 years of service to the state. Loveall worked as a designated principal assistant in administration for the Division.



"I have many fond memories of my 36 years with the Division of Labor Standards," said Loveall. "I cannot pinpoint my fondest memory, because there are too many special ones. I have

worked for 14 different Division directors during those years and with some wonderful people. Hopefully, I have made some lasting friendships."

Sharon Romph retired March 31, 2002 after more than 31 years of service to the Department. Romph worked as a claims technician in the Jefferson City Regional Claims Center of the Division of Employment Security.

According to Romph, her fondest memory of her time at the Department is of her co-workers' kindness.

"My husband passed away six months ago. The outpouring of love, care and concern that was shown to me from my friends was tremendous," Romph said. "This closeness that was always felt when working with them will be greatly missed."

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